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ABSTRACT

U.S. citizenship education should be linked with international educational efforts so that students may learn to understand the array of complex changes that have been and are taking place throughout the world. For too long U.S. educators have been content to perpetuate a social studies curriculum that examines the United States separately from its relationship to the rest of the world. A global perspective on historical scholarship for U.S. citizenship education is sorely needed. The study of U.S. historical events in the context of world affairs will help students to understand the interconnected relationship that the United States is destined to have in the contemporary international order. A 36-item reference list. (DB)

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Global Change and American Citizenship Education: The Vital Role of History

Jan L. Tucker

Historic global changes are underway. "Future historians," asserts Zbigniew Brzezinski (1989), "almost certainly will hail the last years of this century as a watershed in world affairs." These global changes are challenging our commonplace meanings of American citizenship education. Concerned voices, ranging across a disparate educational spectrum -- William Bennett (1989), Ernest Boyer (1986), Lynne Cheney (1987), John Goodlad (1984), and the National Governors (1989) -- are urging that we accelerate our efforts in international education in the schools. Effective American citizenship for the 21st century demands that education must be responsive and this reformulation presents a major challenge for the social studies.

Historic global changes are connected to our thinking about international and citizenship education in the schools in three separate, but related ways. First, they are having a profound influence on the "what, when, where, and how" we think about education in the United States. Global events have unquestionably created the environment for school reform. The theme of economic competitiveness, a hallmark of the trading state, runs through the great majority of the many national reports on school reform. Second, these global developments comprise important content that should be taught in the schools, especially in social studies. Third, they influence research and development in the academic disciplines. The first two have been discussed extensively in the literature on school reform and global education. It is the third connection -- the impact of global trends on scholarship in the academic

disciplines, especially in history -- to which I shall direct my attention. The nature of the production, distribution, and consumption of history in the social studies curriculum will play a vital role in the reconceptualization of American citizenship education.

Rapid global changes are causing a reassessment of America's role in the world at the highest levels. According to a recent report by the Brookings Foundation (American Foreign Policy: . . . 1989),

> The world has changed, but America has not. Can we face our challenges from a position of strength, in full command of our extraordinary resources, or will we ignore them until forced into full retreat, in crisis, with our strength diminished? These problems are now evident to many in our society, and a new consensus can emerge. The time to restructure is now.

This new international climate provides a special urgency for a reexamination of the relationship between international education and American citizenship education. International education, notes Lee Anderson, has become a necessary condition for American citizenship education, and vice versa.[1] To be an effective citizen in the United States today requires extensive knowledge about the world. And to more accurately understand today's world, we must carefully examine how, as American citizens, we have been taught to perceive it.

Perhaps more than at any time in our history, it is in the national interest for American citizens to become knowledgeable, to discard outdated beliefs, and to develop respectful attitudes regarding the rest of the world. Any course of action to the contrary will surely threaten our long-term national

security. Ignorance of the world is no longer a tolerable condition for successful, responsible American citizenship and for the maintenance of political democracy at home and abroad. To argue otherwise begs the key questions posed by the global human condition. Unfortunately, in our national bickering over the number of patriots that can be found on a pin's head we have been unable to set a firm course toward the urgent task of educating American citizens about the world. We should put aside those political matters that divide us, on the left and on the right, and seize the moment.

Our educational efforts will make precious little difference if this newly-gained knowledge runs into a wall of smug cultural superiority or disappears into a cloud of public indifference. National policy makers must demonstrate that they genuinely care about the rest of the world; then, the question of the relationship between international education and American citizenship education will cease to be a divisive issue. However, if politicians choose to act by wrapping themselves in the flag, as some are inclined during periods of change and uncertainty, then the social studies teacher will become more vulnerable, and it will be practically impossible to bring international and American citizenship education into their natural and complementary relationship. Our social studies teachers who are are struggling every day in their classrooms with the new questions of American citizenship education posed by historic global changes deserve the support of our politicians, rather than being undermined. By focussing on the key role of classroom instruction, the recent report of the National Governors' Association, *America in Transition: The International Frontier* (1989), is an excellent example of how political leaders can lend support to the importance of teaching international knowledge in schools.

Global Change and Education Reform

Major global turning points can be identified that separately and in combination are contributing to an historic shift in our role in world affairs: the end of the Cold War; the rise of the trading state; the ascent of the Pacific Rim nations; and the United States as a world nation. These global changes, long underway for some, will be played out during the 1990s and they will have a direct bearing on American citizenship education for the 21st century.

The world is changing so fast and in such a broad sweep that even current textbooks cannot stay apace. For example, a recently-published text on contemporary world politics since WW II purports to cover everything up to the present, but in fact covers the 40-year period between 1945-1985 (McWilliams and Piotrowski 1988). A major weakness of this otherwise-excellent book is that it fails to speak to the reader in terms of the "present," as we know it today. In world of rapid change, the "present" becomes an increasingly important part of the knowledge base of the social studies.

Since 1985, *perestroika* and *glasnost* emerged as two of the best known words in the English language -- and also in Mandarin, Japanese, German, French, Spanish, Hindi, and Shona. George Kennan, the chief architect of the policy of containment, declared the Cold War to be finished. The United States went from being the world's largest creditor nation to becoming its largest debtor nation. The volume of United States trade with the Pacific Rim nations surpassed that of our trade with Europe. In 1989, we watched transfixed as 20-year-old university students in Beijing , aided by global facsimile and computer technology, brought the world's oldest authoritarian society to a halt, if only temporarily, in the name of the Statue of Liberty and *glasnost*.. The

Golden State Warriors signed the first Soviet player to play in the National Basketball Association. With the European Economic Community on its way to becoming a fully-integrated market in 1992, an English politician in 1989 stood for election to the European Parliament from a district in Italy. Has the world changed? Has *our* world changed?

Almost totally ignoring these transitions in global politics, economics, technology, and communication the education reform movement in the United States has advocated an *additive, quantitative* curriculum model almost exclusively. Until very recently, little has been accomplished in terms of the *quality* of the curriculum insofar as it is connected to historic global changes. For example, *A Nation at Risk* (1983) made a strong plea for additional academic content in the curriculum, but said very little about the quality of that content. Typically, our response to the challenge of international economic competition has been *more* mathematics, *more* science, *more* language, and *more* social studies. With a few notable exceptions, the education reform movement has been conspicuously silent on the questions of the relation between international education and American citizenship education.[2]

Faced with an acute need for global materials in the schools, many educators generated their own -- and frequently with great success. A great strength of these materials stemmed from the fact that many were developed by classroom teachers, unlike earlier curriculum reforms that failed because they bypassed the classroom teacher. Without the careful review and the *imprimatur* of the academy, however, some of these materials were criticized as superficial, misleading, or even un-American. The publicity surrounding these few controversies have tended to obscure the many successful efforts that educators are making at the grass roots to build bridges between the new

global realities and American citizenship education, and to new approaches to the organization and the teaching of history. As important as they are, these local and scattered efforts are not enough. More fundemental and widespread changes are required.

Only very recently have the academic disciplines and their subject area counterparts in the school curriculum awakened to the new global realities. For example, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (1989) has urged a major reformulation of the structure of the scientific disciplines and the content of science education around a global perspective. This recent qualitative ferment in the academic disciplines, created by a dynamic awareness of historic global changes, holds considerable promise for a fundamental reform of social studies education. Social studies is and will remain an interdisciplinary *subject area*, but it is *in* the bedrock of the cluster of social studies disciplines where we will find the conceptual strength to meet the challenges of international education and American democratic citizenship education for the 21st century. Social studies educators will be the first to applaud the appearance of this fresh scholarship. This new knowledge, especially from the discipline of history can be used to train teachers, upgrade the quality of school textbooks, and update the school curriculum.

Fresh Historical Perspective for a Changing World

Theodore von Laue (1987) , emeritus professor of history at Clark University, notes that the discipline of history is struggling through a "profound transition."

> On the one side, powerfully entrenched, lies the professional tradition of local history, national history, specialized history

> . . . . That history probes into the past in even greater detail, producing more evidence about smaller subjects . . . . On the other side . . . loom the larger contexts of meaning created by the global framework into which life is now set. It is in that world where our students, our young faculty, our public have to find their way . . . . Our history . . . must be global history, history viewed in all its aspects from a global perspective.

This intellectual ferment among historians comes at a critical time for those who wish to see a closer tie between international education and American citizenship education. Embedded in this discourse may be the potential for a reformulation and restructuring of social studies itself. History is, and always has been, the flagship of the social studies curriculum and carries a great responsibility in the pre-collegiate curriculum for American citizenship education. The importance of a fresh global perspective on historical scholarship for American citizenship education, and consequently for rethinking the social studies, can hardly be overemphasized.

Walter LaFeber (1989), professor of history at Cornell University, recently asserted:

> [global] changes require us to rethink not just the foreign policies we have pursued since the advent of the Cold War, but also our scholarship and the curriculum we teach. . . . fresh scholarship and curriculum changes are needed to understand properly the roots and meanings of these [global] transformations.

For example:

> Scholars will have to ask new questions of those pre-1914 years when the United States had to survive as one of a half-dozen great powers; when Americans confronted a world being rapidly remade by new technology, and when Washington and other capitals had to deal with revolutionary nationalism in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia.

Through the prism of global turning points of the 1990s, additional examples of a refocussing of historical scholarship become apparent. The concept of the trading state, for example, can be useful to seek aspects of our own history that resemble current realities in the interdependent global economy. During the years of the famous clipper ships in the late 18th century, New England, especially Massachusetts, was an important part of a global trading network. Using concepts from anthropology such as culture exchange, it can be demonstrated that this clipper ship trade had a significant influence upon New England, illustrated by the influence of Chinese culture on Boston and other seaport communities.

Using this historical data base, students can hypothesize about the potential cultural effects of contemporary international trade on cities like Norfolk, Houston, Miami, New Orleans, Jacksonville, Charleston, Savannah, Seattle, and Chicago. They can then analyze the pros and cons of the effects of the trading state on local communities in the United States. A recent example of the culture exchange concept at work is the influence of the Japanese culture upon local communities around the nation that serve as sites for Japan's automotive industry. One result is that local community leaders, including teachers, have been invited to Japan to learn more about Japanese culture. In turn,

they have integrated more study about Japan into the curriculum of the local schools. Regrettably, there has been a dark side, also. Following the opening in Tennessee of the very first high school in the United States built for Japanese students, a cross was burned in the school's front lawn, bringing into sharp focus the sometimes violent intersection of international culture exchange with our own domestic history.

Old and new, these two examples of the relationship between the rise of the trading state and culture exchange have roots that run deep in our history. If global concepts are established in the classroom, then students can begin to understand current history and to place analogous historical events such as the voyages of Columbus in a broad intellectual perspective. The examination and testing of analogies is a sturdy intellectual tool and an exciting teaching technique made possible by the context of global history. Similar rich teaching and learning scenarios can be constructed, using as a point of departure contemporary global turning points such as: the end of the Cold War, the ascent of the Pacific Rim nations, and the United States as a world nation.[3]

Why are such new historical questions important to international education and American citizenship education in the schools? With reference to the initial example suggested by LaFeber (1989), pre-collegiate textbooks in United States history seldom treat our international relations between the Civil War and World War I as being terribly important. Domestic concerns such as the closing of the frontier, Reconstruction, industrialization, big business, and the growth of labor unions almost completely overshadow our international connections even though they were very important to the building of America. For example, the construction of our railroads would have been severely retarded without the investment of English capital or the labor of the Irish and Chinese.

The American Revolution itself was a global event, as described by the late Barbara Tuchman (1988). The critical moment in the eventual success of the colonists came when Admiral Count de Grasse sailed from Brest with the great French fleet to join forces eventually with General Washington for the showdown in the Chesapeake Bay and the final battle at Yorktown. The infusion of French support shifted the strategic balance of power and enabled the Colonists to emerge victorious. Less well known is the vital role of the Spanish Caribbean toward ensuring the safe and successful passage of de Grasse on his way to the Colonies (Tuchman 1988: 238-239).

> In the West Indies during July [1781] , de Grasse completed his preparations for the campaign, except for the last necessity of money. The loan he had hope to raise from the inhabitants of Santo Domingo having been thwarted, he turned to another local Spanish source, the population of Cuba. . . . the population of Havana, remembering the assault on their city by the British less than twenty years before, were glad of the opportunity to retaliate. By popular subscription, the money for de Grasse is said to have been raised in less than 48 hours, with the help of Cuban ladies who contributed their diamonds, and was promptly delivered to his flagship . . . . On August 15, 1781, . . . de Grasse sailed from Cap-Français for America and Chesapeake Bay with the money, . . . three Saint-Simon regiments and all 28 ships of his fleet.

In United States history textbooks, our global connections during the early and middle periods are practically a non-event, with important exceptions like Manifest Destiny, the Mexican War, the Spanish-American War, and "walk

softly, but carry a big stick." So even when our global linkages manage to come to the surface, they generally reflect only the American perspective and are footnotes in our relentless march to national unity and world power. For most Americans, our involvement with the world began in earnest with World War I, and even then we are portrayed as reluctant players on the world stage. This global myopia typically found in United States history textbooks may have served an American citizenship education function during a period when the nation was seeking its distinctive identity among the world's nations, but it becomes increasingly counterproductive during the global era when cooperation and consensus better serve our national interests (American Foreign Policy: . . . 1989: 1+).

Historical questions raised through the lense of the new global realities can provide a more complete picture of our early and continuing engagement with the rest of the world. A global picture of our own history will help dispel the prevailing attitude of "splendid isolation" that today impedes the desired *rapprochement* between international education and American citizenship education efforts. If our own history turns out to be much more global than we have been taught, our new understanding should provide a firm foundation for enabling American citizens to deal more eagerly and confidently with the interdependent world we have entered. Being interested in the world and being an American will no longer be incompatible; instead, they will be congruent and mutually reinforcing.

The insights of von Laue, LaFeber, Tuchman and other scholars such as William McNeill, Immanuel Wallerstein, and the late Fernand Braudel foreshadow the development of a fresh historical scholarship reflecting the trends of global realities. The historical perspective that places American history in a

global context will serve us well as we continue our efforts over the next decade to improve the connection between international and American citizenship education.

Historical Scholarship and Academic Reform in the Social Studies

Critically important to the question of the relationship between international education and American citizenship education is the timing of such pleas for globally-oriented historical scholarship. In parallel, but running slightly ahead of the new historical scholarship, a mostly additive, quantitative, and static model of history has been recommended for the social studies curriculum by prestigious national commissions such as the Bradley Commission on History and the Schools (1988), and by widely-publicized statements like "Education for Democracy: A Statement of Principles (1987), " released as a joint project of the American Federation of Teachers, Freedom House, and the Educational Excellence Network. At the state level, the model is being implemented in California through its History-Social Science Framework.

Paradoxically, some of these reports strongly advocate the teaching of "myths, legends, and tall tales" in the social studies curriculum at the primary grade level in order to "fire student imagination" and to develop student interest in history and the humanities (California State Department of Education 1988: 4-5).[4] On the face of it, this recommendation appears innocent enough. A deeper understanding of the global history of the 20th century reveals, however, that "myths, legends, and tall tales" in the hands of anti-democratic forces, be they ideologies of the extreme left or right, can be twisted easily to serve the purposes of the state (Blackburn 1985).

By whom and according to what criteria will these "myths, legends, and tall tales" be chosen? Will impressionable students, their imaginations stirred by fantasy, subsequently be able to distinguish between fiction and fact in grade four when they study state history, in grade five when they learn about United States history, or in grade six when students turn their attention to the cradles of civilization -- and so on into the upper grades. Where will students be taught the important distinction between value judgments and statements of fact, the intellectual building blocks of critical thinking? Are "myths, legends, and tall tales," when offered as history, a proper social studies foundation for democratic citizens who live in a complex world and who starve for reliable knowledge? Will the introduction of history through myths provide a respect for grounded knowledge, the role of evidence, and the rules of objective inquiry -- paramount goals of American citizenship education? In what way are "myths, legends, and tall tales" different from "the things that go bump in the night" and the superstitions that ruled human behavior before the Enlightenment? "Myths, legends, and tall tales" taught as literature *within the context* of history are one thing; but taught *as* history -- is quite another and a most dubious matter.

A much more encouraging effort can be found in the report of the National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools (1989) entitled "Charting a Course: Social Studies Curriculum for the 21st Century." The National Commission report artfully combines international education with American citizenship education and this qualitative reordering of history as a subject in the schools is deeply embedded in its goal statement and in its recommended curriculum scope and sequence.

The National Commission report promises to be a very important document in the history of social studies and American citizenship education. Importantly, the qualitative ferment in historical scholarship based upon a global perspective, underway in the academy for the last decade, is for the first time introduced by the Commission into the K-12 social studies curriculum as a serious alternative to the quantitative, additive approach.

Two phrases illustrate the strong potential of the Commission's recommendations.

> The special experience of the United States must be set in the context of world affairs, so that our continuing involvement with other nations will be seen as normal and inescapable.

> The best arrangement [for the social studies curriculum in grades 9-12] would be to combine study of the United States with study of the world in the literal sense by teaching it as part of the general story of humanity in recent centuries . . . . closer integration between national and world historical changes is clearly preferable [to the separate teaching of United States history] since it allows students to connect the national past with its larger setting.

Such an approach to the study of history will mitigate against the national cocoon mentality, when our close attention to international circumstances emerges during periods of crisis, only to return immediately thereafter to the more "natural" state of splendid isolation. The task of American citizenship

education in an interdependent world is to educate for a *sustained* national interest and involvement in world affairs (Lepgold 1989: 18).

The approach being recommended by the National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools is encouraging. The time lag, however, between this fresh historical scholarship and the traditional approach that pervades the educational reform movement, is far too great. One may wonder if "the horse is already out of the barn." New classroom materials will be required; teachers must be trained. Textbooks must be written to reflect accurately the correlation of the historical experience of the United States with the rest of the world. It is a matter of national urgency to close the gap. The federal government ought to advance global historical scholarship by making it a priority for funding. This lag in bringing globally-oriented historical scholarship to bear on the social studies curriculum is a deplorable state of affairs for American citizenship education because the opportunity to revise the social studies curriculum fundamentally may not occur again in our lifetime. Unless something is done to speed up the process to rejuvenate historical scholarship with a global framework, we may well lock another generation of students into a history curriculum out of touch with the times, a fate we can ill afford in these rapidly changing times.

The quantitative argument for just more history in the curriculum is not the answer. The rationale for history in the curriculum must be based upon something other than "history is good and we need more of it." The fundamental questions about the study and the teaching of history are analytic and qualitative, asked with an eye toward how history can be made into a vital part of the school curriculum -- rather than the deadly review, recite, and regurgitate syndrome that currently places history at the bottom of student interest. How may

the study of history, with a global perspective, contribute to democratic citizenship? Can history be made more meaningful to the everyday lives of students? How can we deal with conflicting historical interpretations? How can history assist us to examine unexamined assumptions and to make "puzzles of facts," as Henry Steele Commager has urged? How can history make us more critically aware of the human condition and of our own society?

For example, as a springboard for historical inquiry through a global lense, what might Rudyard Kipling, generally known for his love of the Empire, have meant when he wrote: "What should they know of England who only England know?" Paul Kennedy, historian at Yale University and author of the controversial best seller, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (1988) provides a contemporary United States analogy to what Kipling may have been suggesting for England at the turn of the century. Kennedy (*The Miami Herald* 1988) noted that "you only properly understand your own country when you remove the ethnocentric spectacles, examine the history of other countries, and put your own nation within the larger context of global developments." Professor Kennedy is highly critical of the current crop of educational reformers, meaning national politicians and administrators, who decry the lack of historical knowledge among our young people and who would cure the situation by emphasizing "traditional, inward-looking, American history alone."

An even more profound issue, according to Kennedy, is the lack of knowledge of world history and our nation's place in it by our political leaders themselves. He forecast that our presidential candidates would go through the 1988 campaign "believing that they have nothing to learn from history but a few platitudes about Manifest Destiny, the American Way, 'appeasement' and the . . . like." Who among us today will deny the accuracy of his prediction? And he

asks, "Is it too much to ask today's politicians to put history into their own curriculum, as well as recommending it for all 15-year-olds?" And for politicians and students alike, Kennedy's core curriculum must contain more than a "basic corpus of historical facts about the nation's Constitution, its presidents, its chief political developments. [It is also necessary to understand] the larger economic and strategical changes that have occurred on this planet over the past few centuries (*The Miami Herald* 1988)."

The next domestic political era will be shaped fundamentally by deep-running global trends. There is an urgency about this matter of international and American citizenship education for those who believe in political democracy. Will the rest of the world, developing at breakneck speed, permit the United States the luxury of an entire generation to readjust to the international scheme of things? I think not. The rest of the world is not waiting. They will proceed with or without us.

The further development of a fresh, globally-oriented knowledge base in history and its rapid infusion into the social studies curriculum will greatly assist us in understanding the complex era that has opened up before us. And then we can more confidently forge a policy for American citizenship education that is up to the challenge.

Notes

1 Anderson also noted that neither is a sufficient condition of the other.

2 Exceptions include: *To Secure the Blessings of Liberty: Report of the National Commission on the Role and Future of State Colleges and Universities.* Washington, D. C.: AASCU. 1986; *The United States Prepares for its Future: Global Perspectives in Education. Report of the Study Commission on Global Education.* New York: The American Forum on Global Education. 1987; *Educating for Global Competence: The Report of the Advisory Council for International Exchange.* New York: The Council on International Educational Exchange. 1988.

[3] Examples include: the influence of the Cold War on domestic institutions such as the family and education; the contemporary significance of the relocation experience of Japanese-Americans in the United States during WW II; and the analysis of earlier struggles over language policies in the light of the current "English Only" controversy.

[4] Also see Diane Ravitch. "International Studies in the California Framework." *Access*. 86-87 (May 1989) 6.

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